

PROCLAMATION

Against Regraiting of Victual, and Forestallers, and Allowing the Importation of Victual free of Publick Burden.

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WILLIAM by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland; Defender of the Faith, To
Privy Council, Messengers at Arms, Our Sheriffs in that part, Conjunctly and Severally, Specially, Constitute, Greeting: Forasmuch as by Several Acts of Parliament, the keeping up of Victual to a Dearth, is strictly Prohibited, and particularly, it is Statute by the Acts, James the Second Parliament Cap. sixth, twenty two and twenty three, that for the Escheuing of Dearth: Sheriffs, Bailies and other Officers both to Burghs and to Land, inquire what Persons Buys Victual, and holds it to a Dearth; And that the saids Sheriffs and Officers make such known, that in case they hold more than will Sustain them, and their Meinzie to New-Corn they may be Punished, and Demeaned as Ockerers and Usurers; and the Victual Escheated to Us; and that the same be Presented to Mercats, and Sold as the Price goes. And by the Act James the Second Parliament ninth, Cap. thirty eight and thirty ninth, it is Ordained that no manner of Victual be holden in Girels by any man to a Dearth, but allanerly what is needful for their own Persons, and Sustentation of their Households; and that the saids Persons present all that they have more to the Mercat, under the Pain of Escheat thereof: And Searchers are appointed in Edinburgh and Leith to make the saids Acts Effectual; As likewise, the Crime of Forestalling is forbidden by several Acts and Statutes, and particularly by the Act, James the sixth, Parliament twelfth, Cap. one hundred and forty eight, it is Declared, that who Buys any Merchandise, or Victual coming to Fair or Mercat, or makes any Contract or Promise for the Buying of the same, before the said Merchandise or Victual shall be in the Fair or Mercat-Place ready to be Sold, or shall make any Motion by Word, Writ, or Message for raising of the Prices, or Dearer Selling of the said Merchandise and Victual, or who shall Diswade any from coming, and bringing the foresaid Merchandise and Victual to Fair or Mercat, shall be Esteemed and Judged a Forestaller; And it is Ordained that all such Forestallers may be Pursued before the Justices, or Magistrats of Burghs, and that without a special Libel; but only upon Forestalling in General, and the Persons convicted to be Fined for the first Fault in Forty Pounds, for the Second in one hundred Merks, and for the Third to Incurr the Tinsel of Moveables. And Seing that through the not due Observance, and the Execution of the foresaid Acts: The Calamity of the Country, by the present Scarcity and Dearth is greatly Increased. THEREFORE We with Advice of the Lords of Our Privy Council, have thought fit to Revive the same, and Ordain them to be put to Strict Execution, and for that Effect, to Empower and Require all Sheriffs of Shires, Steuarts of Stewartries, Lords and Baillies of Regalities, and their Deputs, and Magistrats of Burghs, as likewise all Commissioners of Supply, and Justices of Peace, to cause Inquire, and Search to be made, who holds up, or Girels Victual or keeps Stacks contrary to the foresaid Laws, And to Command and Charge the Keepers up of the said Victual in Girels, Stacks, or otherways Contrary to the saids Statutes, either to Thresh out, bring, and Expose the same for Sale, in open and ordinary Mercats, or otherwise to open their Girels, and other Houses where the Victual is kept, and there Sell the same, as the said Sheriffs, Steuarts of Stewartries, Lords and Baillies of Regalities, and their Deputs, and Magistrats of Burghs, or any two of the saids Commissioners, shall find the ordinary Price to Rule for the Time in the Country, not below the last Candlemas Fiers, with Certification that if they Failzie therein, they shall be Proceeded against; and the Pains of the foresaid Acts of Parliament Execute upon them with all Rigour: And in the Mean time the Victual Girneled, and Unlawfully kept up as said is, Arrested and Sequestrat by the foresaid Sheriffs and others as Escheat. And further We with Advice foresaid, Command and Charge all Magistrats of Burghs, and other Officers of the Land to take Care that all Mercats and Fairs be duly Regulat, conform to the Laws, without Extortion, and to cause put the foresaid Acts of Parliament against Forestallers to due and vigorous Execution: Certifying the foresaid Sheriffs, Magistrats, and others, who shall fail in their Duty in the Premisses, that upon Information given to the Lords of Our Privy Council, they shall be therefore severely Punished, as the Lords of Our Privy Council shall see Cause. And further, for the better Releif of the Country under the present great Scarcity, whereby the Prices of Victual are arisen above the Rates mentioned in the Act of Parliament for prohibiting the Import of Forraign Victual; We with Advice foresaid, Do hereby grant License and full Liberty to all persons to Import Victual and Corns, of all sorts, from any Forraign Kingdom or Country, and that free of Custom, Excise, or other Imposition; and for that effect Recommends it to the Commissioners of Our Thesaurie, to Discharge the Excising thereof for the said Victual to be Imported as said is, after the day and date hereof, and that notwithstanding of any Act of Parliament or Book of Rates Imposing the same; Declaring, that this License and Liberty, is to Endure until the First Day of September next to come, and no longer. Our Will is herefore, and We Charge you strictly and Command, that incontinent these Our Letters seen, ye pass to the Mercat-Cross of Edinburgh, and to the Mercat-Crosses of the remanent Head-Burghs of the several Shires and Stewartries within this Kingdom, and there in Our Name and Authority, by open Proclamation, make Intimation hereof, that none pretend Ignorance. And Ordains these Presents to be Printed.

Given under Our Signet at Edinburgh the Ninth Day of June and of Our Reign the Eight Year, 1696.

Ex delibetatione Dominorum Secreti Concilii.
GIL B. ELIOT Cls. Sti. Concilii



GOD save the KING!